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Eleven Ways of Looking at Clouds

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Eleven Ways of Looking at Clouds

I

At dawn Monet's ephemeral cloudlets,
gray on peach, float adagio.
Lying on the floor, you notice and comment.

II

Cotton cumulus clouds;
summer puffs drift,
build.
Fair or fierce?

III

Yellow clouds hover over Shanghai.
Light scatters
fueling a sunset of fumes.

IV

Ethereal brushstrokes,
cirrus clouds of fine frozen filaments—
mares' tails and mackerel scales.

V

In Gram's watery eye
a lifetime of skies kaleidoscope;
summer clouds outnumbered by steely winter ones.

VI

A white slash;
a false cloud bisects the blue.

VII

Sediment clouds the water.
The newly freed river
reflects mist and firs.

VIII

In the parched West
brown clouds shroud mountains;
lives lost in the cruel heat.

IX

Sooty clouds of black
race brittle leaves across the harvest moon;
charcoal on crumbling newsprint.

X

A blanket of clouds comforts the vast lake.
A long fetch builds,
a blizzard rages to the south.

XI

Morning clouds, impermanent in the soft light;
free spirited,
the face of the sky an open book.

Jill Spealman